

2017 Legislative Session Wrap-Up

It was an honor to represent the people of District 20 during the 2017 Florida Legislative Session. While the Legislature is far from perfect and every session is different, I'm happy to report that my colleagues and I were able to pass quality legislation that will positively impact the lives of many across the state and right here at home in West Central Florida.



Tom Lee
Florida State Senator



BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

\$82.4 Billion

Sound Fiscal Management

- Balanced budget.
- No new taxes.
- \$3.2 Billion in reserves to reduce a projected 2019-2020 budget shortfall.

Investment in Education

- Historic spending for student financial aid and the State University System.
- Record K-12 funding.
- Expanded school choice.
- Bonuses for effective teachers.

Protection for Florida's Environment

Unprecedented action and funding for the Everglades, Lake Okeechobee, and areas affected by harmful and toxic discharges.

Commitment to State Employees

- First state employee pay increase in six years.
- Investment in employee benefits.
- Pension changes.

VICTORIES

I sponsored legislation on a wide variety of issues important to Floridians. Adhering to my guiding principles, I focused on lowering taxes, eliminating government waste, removing unnecessary regulation, and modernizing healthcare.



TAX RELIEF FOR FLORIDIANS

Amendment 1 and 2 on the 2018 Ballot

This session marked a first for me – I sponsored two Constitutional amendments that were adopted by the Legislature and will appear on your 2018 ballot. These amendments, if passed by the voters, will **cut more than \$1.4 Billion in taxes** for Florida's businesses and families.

The first will offer an additional homestead tax exemption of property valued between \$100,000 and \$125,000, providing much needed relief to Florida's middle class. This additional \$25,000 exemption will save Florida homeowners more than \$644 million next year. The second retains the 10% cap on annual increases of non-homestead property (including second homes, rental properties, and vacation homes) that was set to sunset in 2019. Failure to pass this on the ballot will result in one of the largest tax increases in the history of our state.



EMPOWERED EMPLOYEES

State Group Health Insurance Plan Updates

Florida's current state group health insurance plan is outdated, offers limited choices, and lacks the price transparency needed to empower employees and their families to make cost-effective healthcare purchases.

I passed legislation that puts state employees in control of their own healthcare, provides a range of insurance plans, and allows those who choose less expensive health plans to use the savings to purchase extra benefits, fund a personal health savings account, or take home as additional pay.

This bill delivers high-quality healthcare at lower costs that gives state employees the flexibility to decide what benefits make the most sense for them.



EFFICIENT BUILDING CODES

Common Sense Building Reforms

I am proud to sponsor a bill that injects more common sense into how we build in Florida. The bill simplifies the process by which the Florida Building Commission updates the Florida Building Code, reducing the excess regulation and bureaucratic red tape that has driven up the cost of homes in our state. The new process allows Florida to keep our building code current without creating unnecessary and costly burdens on industry and consumers.



SMALL BUSINESS DEREGULATION

Flexibility for the Cottage Foods Industry

Another important victory for small businesses was our cottage foods bill, which removes unnecessary government regulation on local-home based food businesses. The bill increases the annual gross sales limitation for cottage food operators from \$15,000 to \$50,000, and allows cottage food operations to accept payment for products online. This reduces government oversight to provide the industry with more operational flexibility.

WHAT'S NEXT

Despite considerable achievements and many of our best efforts this session, I'm disappointed that the Legislature fell short on several important fronts, including:

- Medical Marijuana
- Workers' Compensation Reform
- Gaming Compact Ratification
- Direct Primary Care
- PIP Repeal

Heading into our next session, I have every intention to follow through on these policies and my commitment to fight for everyday Floridians. In the interim, it is my hope that you will remain engaged and reach out to my office to provide feedback or ideas on how we can work together to better our state.



In discussion with the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, Richard Corcoran.

(Associated Press)

CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION (CRC)

I am proud to spend the next year serving on the CRC, a thirty-seven member revision commission that meets once every twenty years to review Florida's Constitution and propose changes for voter consideration. Any amendments proposed by the CRC are placed on the 2018 General Election ballot.

I am honored to have been appointed to the CRC by the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, and look forward to traveling across the state over the next year to gather ideas on how to better Florida's Constitution. You can track the actions of the CRC, submit comments and proposed constitutional amendments online, and review information on all scheduled public hearings here: <http://flcrc.gov/>



2017-2018 Constitution Revision Commission.

Thank you to my staff - Pierce, Charlie, Sarah and Jack, for all of their hard work this Session on behalf of District 20, and **thank you to my constituents** for being involved in the process. Your advocacy does not go unnoticed.

Stay Connected!

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@TomLeeFlorida



@TomLeeFL



Celebrating Hillsborough Day at the Capitol.



Testimony on the Senate floor.



Gator Day at the Capitol with my wife, the Honorable Laurel Lee.



Conferring with Senator Gary Farmer.